

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

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FOLLOWING REPEAT BELGRADE 1260, SENT SECSTATE INFO ZAGREB
16 FEB:

QUOTE S E C R E T BELGRADE 1260

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: OVIP YO US

SUBJECT: TITO - A PROFILE

1. VISITS MOSCOW, PEKING AND NOW WASHINGTON IN JUST NINE MONTHS.
ATTRACTS TO BELGRADE TWO OF 1978'S MAJOR MULTILATERAL GATHERINGS
-- CSCE AND THE NON-ALIGNED FOREIGN MINISTERS CONFERENCE.
FATHER OF THE UN SPECIAL SESSION ON DISARMAMENT THIS MAY.
STAGE-MANAGING A PARTY CONGRESS IN JUNE WHICH WILL CONFIRM HIS
UNDISPUTED RULE AT HOME. AND THE SUBJECT OF A CURRENT RUMOR --
THE TRUTH OF WHICH IS LESS IMPORTANT THAN WHAT IT IMPLIES ABOUT
HIS VITALITY -- THAT HE HAS REPLACED A THIRTY YEAR YOUNGER WIFE
WITH A WOMAN NEARLY SIXTY YEARS HIS JUNIOR.

2. TITO AT 85 -- ALERT, TOUGH AND STILL AMBITIOUS.

3. WHAT CONTINUES TO DRIVE HIM AND HOW CAN HE BE INFLUENCED?
TITO HAS AMPLE REASON TO REST ON HIS OARS AND TO IGNORE THE
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COUNSEL OF OTHERS.NO OTHER COMMUNIST LEADER IN POWER
TODAY CAN CLAIM TO HAVE PARTICIPATED IN THE BOLSHEVIK REVOLUTION.
NO ONE ELSE IS LEFT FROM THAT EXTRAORDINARY GENERATION OF
WORLD WAR II LEADERS -- CHURCHILL, ROOSEVELT, STALIN, DE GAULLE.
AMONG THOSE -- NEHRU, NASSER, SUKARNO -- WHO BROUGHT TOGETHER
THE MAJORITY OF MANKIND IN OPPOSITION TO THE TWO SUPER-POWERS,
ONLY TITO IS STILL HERE TO GUIDE THE NON-ALIGNED.

4. AND GIVING SPECIAL STATURE TO HIS VIEWS AS WELL AS HIS PERSON, TITO HAS SEEN THE WORLD MOVE IN HIS DIRECTION ON A WIDE VARIETY OF ISSUES. HE WAS CAST OUT OF THE COMMUNIST CAMP IN 1948 ONLY TO BE COURTIED LATER BY THE SOVIETS AND MORE RECENTLY BY THE CHINESE. HE TOLD THE UNITED STATES FOR DECADES THAT WE WERE HURTING OUR OWN LONG-TERM INTERESTS BY THE STANDS WE TOOK IN INDOCHINA, PANAMA, SOUTHERN AFRICA AND THE MIDDLE EAST. HE IS CONSULTED BY EUROCOMMUNISTS AND NORTH KOREANS, BY EGYPT AND THE PLO. HE ENJOYS A DEGREE OF INFLUENCE ON THE INTERNATIONAL SCENE OUT OF ALL PROPORTION TO THE SIZE OF THE COUNTRY HE RULES.

5. IN YUGOSLAVIA ITSELF HE HAS REASON TO BE SATISFIED WITH HIS ACCOMPLISHMENTS. IN THIRTY YEARS HE HAS TRANSFORMED A LARGELY RURAL, ILLITERATE, BALKAN BACKWATER INTO A SOCIETY TWO-THIRDS URBAN AND ON ITS WAY TO JOIN EUROPE'S MODERN, DEVELOPED MAINSTREAM. THE COMMUNIST PARTY HE HAS HEADED FOR FORTY YEARS HAS ENFORCED STABILITY ON A PEOPLE PREVIOUSLY BEST KNOWN FOR THEIR ASSASSINATIONS AND CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE OUTBREAK OF WORLD WARS. SOCIALIST SELF-MANAGEMENT WITH ITS WORKERS COUNCILS (WHICH KARDELJ AND HE CREATED) AND YUGOSLAVIA'S OPEN BORDERS MAKE IT THE MOST DEMOCRATIC AND OPEN OF ALL COMMUNIST REGIMES.

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6. BUT TITO SEES HIS VISION ONLY PARTLY FULFILLED, AND THOSE THINGS HE HAS ACCOMPLISHED THREATENED BOTH AT HOME AND ABROAD. WITH DEMONSTRATIONS IN THE STREETS IN 1971, HE WAS RUDELY REMINDED THAT MANY OF HIS PEOPLE STILL CONSIDER THEMSELVES CROATS OR SERBS FIRST; OLD ENMITIES AND ASPIRATIONS ARE STILL PRESENT NOT FAR BENEATH THE SURFACE DESPITE HIS BEST EFFORTS. THE OPPOSITION OF SEPARATIST, PRO-SOVIET AND LIBERAL FORCES STILL LEADS HIM TO KEEP SOMETHING OVER 500 POLITICAL PRISONERS IN JAIL. AND AS HE THINKS ABOUT THE NEXT FIVE TO TEN YEARS AND HIS INEVITABLE DEPARTURE FROM POWER, HE CANNOT BE CERTAIN HIS COUNTRY WILL HOLD TOGETHER AND THE PARTY REMAIN IN POWER.

7. EQUALLY DISTURBING TO HIM IS A GLOBAL SITUATION FRAUGHT WITH UNCERTAINTIES AND PRESSURES.

-- THE SOVIET UNION, YUGOSLAVIA'S MAJOR MILITARY THREAT, CONTINUES TO GROW STRONGER AND TO DEMAND MILITARY BASE AND OVERFLIGHT RIGHTS HERE AND A SPECIAL POLITICAL RELATIONSHIP. TITO IS AS NERVOUS ABOUT POST-BREZHNEV SOVIET POLICIES TOWARD YUGOSLAVIA AS HE IS ABOUT POST-TITO INSTABILITY AT HOME.

-- EARLY SIGNS THAT THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION WOULD BE MORE "PROGRESSIVE" THAN FORD-KISSINGER ON A WIDE VARIETY OF ISSUES ENCOURAGED A SUBSTANTIAL WARMING OF THE BILATERAL ATMOSPHERE. BUT WHILE TITO IS CLEARLY MORE COMFORTABLE WITH THIS ADMINISTRATION, HE NEVERTHELESS CONTINUES TO LOOK UPON THE UNITED STATES AS A NATION COMMITTED TO THE MAINTENANCE OF THE GLOBAL STATUS QUO. HIS CONCERN FOR AMERICAN INTERVENTIONISM, UNDIFFERENTIATED ANTI-COMMUNISM AND, PERHAPS ABOVE ALL, OUR "TOLERATION" OF CROATION SEPARATIST TERRORISTS IN THE UNITED STATES IS ALWAYS CLOSE TO THE SURFACE. FOR HIS IS NEVER FAR REMOVED FROM HIS LONG-TIME FEAR THAT THE UNITED STATES AND THE SOVIET UNION, A LA YALTA, WILL SPLIT YUGOSLAVIA
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NORTH-SOUTH AFTER HE GOES.

-- FINALLY, HIS POWER BASE, THE NON-ALIGNED, HAS NEVER BEEN AS TORN BY INTERNAL DISPUTES --OVER THE SPANISH SAHARA, THE MIDDLE EAST, SOMALIA-ETHIOPIA, AND FOR THE FIRST TIME ACTUAL WAR BETWEEN TWO COMMUNIST (AND NON-ALIGNED) STATES CAMBODIA AND VIETNAM. IN ALL OF THESE DISPUTES TITO SEES ONCE AGAIN HIS TWO GREATEST CONCERNS: INTERFERENCE BY THE SUPER-POWERS AND THREATS TO TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY.

8. ALL THIS ADDS UP TO A MAN WHO EXPECTS TO RECEIVE HIS DUE AS AN ELDER STATESMAN, WILL NOT CHANGE HIS STRATEGIC COMMITMENT TO "PROGRESSIVE CAUSES" ABROAD OR AT HOME, AND IS HYPERSENSITIVE TO PRESSURE FROM THE UNITED STATES AS WELL AS THE SOVIET UNION. BUT HE IS AWARE OF THE WEAKNESSES IN HIS COUNTRY'S POSITION AND ITS NEED FOR HELP FROM OTHERS. THEREFORE, HE IS, PREPARED TO SHOW A CERTAIN TACTICAL FLEXIBILITY IF IT WILL STRENGTHEN YUGOSLAVIA'S SECURITY, INDEPENDENCE AND ROLE IN THE WORLD.

9. TALKING ABOUT PRE-WAR, PRE-REVOLUTION YUGOSLAVIA, THIS FORMER POOR METAL-WORKER ONCE REMARKED "A FEW PEOPLE HAD COMPLETE ABUNDANCE WHILE MOST HAD LACKED EVEN THE BASIC NECESSITIES". THIS RESENTMENT AGAINST PRIVILEGE STILL MOTIVATES NOT ONLY HIS STRIVING TO BUILD A MORE EGALITARIAN, SOCIALIST SOCIETY AT HOME BUT HIS CENTRAL FOREIGN POLICY GOAL OF ACHIEVING MORE EQUAL RELATIONS AMONG STATES. IT IS ALSO THE KEY TO UNDERSTANDING HOW THE UNITED STATES CAN BEST INFLUENCE TITO.

-- EQUAL STATUS. TITO WANTS TERRIBLY TO PLAY AND TO BE SEEN PLAYING A MAJOR ROLE IN THE INTERNATIONAL ARENA. HE DEEPLY BELIEVES THAT "VISIBILITY IS SECURITY" FOR YUGOSLAVIA. HE WILL
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PAY A LIMITED BY marginally worthwhile price for this. PRESIDENT CARTER'S LETTERS ON THE EVE OF HIS TRIP TO MOSCOW, PYONGYANG AND PEKING, AND MORE RECENTLY, ON THE MIDDLE EAST AND THE HORN, HAVE HAD AN EFFECT, E.G. HE CAUTIONED THE NORTH KOREANS TO BE MODERATE AND HE RECENTLY PUBLICLY CALLED ON THE PLO AND ARABS TO RECOGNIZE ISRAEL AS A REALITY. SIMPLY BY RECEIVING TITO, REVIEWING THE "BIG PICTURE" AND PROMISING TO SUSTAIN THEIR DIALOGUE, PRESIDENT CARTER WILL BE TAKING ANOTHER MAJOR STEP TOWARD A MORE COOPERATIVE RELATIONSHIP ON MULTI-LATERAL ISSUES.

-- EQUAL SECURITY. TITO'S SECOND MAJOR GOAL IS TO BRING ABOUT GREATER SECURITY FOR THE WORLD' SMALLER NATIONS, YUGOSLAVIA FIRST AMONG THEM. HE IS NEARLY AS DEEPLY INTO DISARMAMENT QUESTIONS AS PRESIDENT CARTER. HE IS EAGER TO BUY AMERICAN ARMS TO BALANCE YUGOSLAVIA'S PRESENT RELIANCE ON THE SOVIET UNION. WHILE HE BELIEVES THIS ADMINISTRATION HAS BEEN SOMEWHAT MORE FORTHCOMING IN BOTH FIELDS, HE IS, ON BALANCE, STILL MORE DISSATISFIED THAN SATISFIED WITH WHAT WE HAVE OFFERED TO DATE AND SEEMS CONVINCED THAT THIS IS DUE TO A DESIRE TO MAINTAIN OUR "DOMINANCE".

10. FINALLY, INVITE AND LISTEN TO HIS VIEWS WITH DEFERENCE, REMIND HIM THAT HE IS SIX MONTHS YOUNGER THAN AVERELL HARRIMAN, DON'T MENTION HIS WIFE, AND ALL WILL GO WELL. EAGLEBURGER UNQUOTE. VANCE

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